ZAMI

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 2 *ATLANTA'S PREMIERE AFRICAN- AMERICAN LESBIAN ORGANIZATION*
NOV,1996

MARY ANNE'S MUSINGS

It is mid October as I write this column -- two and a half months away from the New Year. The leaves are starting to change into a cornucopia of vivid oranges, golds and burnt reds.

The National Weather Center is forecasting temperatures to dip into the mid 30's and low 40's and it's finally starting to feel like fall in Atlanta!

Days like these bring on moments of reflection and I wonder what 1997 will bring for this community and most specifically for ZAMI as a group of Black lesbians working together as friends and lovers. 1996 was a very good year for our organization as we achieved many of our goals.

Several of you commented throughout last year that we needed a larger space and an earlier meeting time. We have made those adjustments by moving to 828 West Peachtree Street and changing the meeting time from 6:30-8:30 pm., to 4-6pm.

The new meeting space is much larger and equipped with couches, recliners and padded chairs. There is a television for video watching and a soda machine. Please come and check it out.

Additionally, we are changing the format of our meetings to have discussions and special programs on the second Sunday and to gather for potlucks and/or community activities on the fourth Sunday.

On October 27, we will have our first potluck at the new meeting space from 4-7pm. Please bring your favorite dish, board game, deck of cards and a friend! There is a microwave oven in the room if you need to heat a dish. ZAMI will supply sodas and paper products.

On November 10, ZAMI will meet with Lesbians of Color over 50. We will view the film, "Ruby and Tiny" which chronicles the lives of a Black lesbian couple who have been living and working together as musicians since the 1930's.There will be discussion immediately following the film...

Please see details under ZAMI meeting!

DEAR GRANDMA

Dear Grandma and Mom:

I hope this letter finds you both in the best of health. Lately, in the early hours when the kids are asleep and all is quiet within my world, I often reflect on days gone by, chances given and moments lost.

I remember a child's feeling of helplessness, a man's anger and a woman's lack of courage, a battered ego and wounded pride. But just as suddenly, I remember breakfast in the park, Sunday morning church service and family gatherings.

More importantly, I remember how you both have given me a profound sense of pride in being the best, at whatever I chose to be.

And this is when I begin to cry because I hope that what I am about to share does not cause you to change.

I realize that at age 41, I am quite small in the scheme of things, and

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that I may have been hasty in decisions that I have made and paths I have chosen to take.

Over the years, I have given so much and throughout the process, I became lost. I guess I could say that I have decided to find myself but that would be untrue. Because now, I realize that I have always been here – you have just refused to see who I really am.

See me now, PLEASE!

Not as Deborah – a wife for 19 1/2 years, a mother, a daughter and a granddaughter. Instead, see me as Deborah – the intelligent individual you helped to create. See me as Deborah the "lesbian".

Grandma, I can see you shaking your head and saying sadly, **"lesbian, Arthur Lee did she say lesbian? Lord, Lord, Lord."** Mom I know you are probably saying, **"the first to go to college, the first to get divorced and now the first lesbian. She's really lost it now and she is going to be destroyed with the rest of this wicked world!"**

Grandma, Mom, I know you are saying these things, but I still love you. And it is because I love you, that I share this with you now.

Don't be sad for me, after years of frustration and pain,years of sensing **"something wasn't right"** I finally have an understanding. And it is with much fear and uncertainty that I share the reasons with you.

Yes, I am a lesbian and this is the most important and best discovery about myself that I could have made. I am a lesbian, and that is good.

So in closing, please know that I am not seeking your permission, nor your approval or even your understanding. What I ask is your willingness to try to see me as I am.

I miss you and want us to be a family again.

Love, Deborah

Deborah McCree is a registered practicing Nurse Midwife; and is currently working on a novel.

DYKES AGAINST DRAMA: A MONTHLY ADVICE COLUMN

Dear Ms.Vulva,
Am a recent transplant to the South and have found both the culture, food and women most enjoyable.

For a couple of months I have been courting a very smart, attractive and wonderful southern sister but am confused. Here's the problem – we drink, dance and dine almost all the time but I'm the one dishing out the dollars!

Now I know I used the term **"courting"** to describe our actual **"dating"** but being a northerner, I just threw it in to be cute...could it be that I really AM supposed to literally be paying for the favor of her company?

Please advise, 'cause my nose is open but I can't smell a thing...

Dear **"Nose ...Open,"**
I smell a couple of things...Obviously, you are courting/dating a smart yet selfish sister. Her behavior isn't about North or South it's all about HER!

Get a grip! If the woman's all that wonderful then you need to do some talking – and not over a meal that you've paid for. Take some time and find out what her expectations are, is she employed (?), does she barter – then you decide whether or not you can <u>afford</u> (literally) to <u>continue seeing her</u>

Dear Ms.Vulva,
I have been dating a woman for about a year and almost every aspect of our relationship is fine – except for the sex. She considers herself a **"top"** and doesn't let me make love to her.

I am almost ashamed to admit that things have gone on like this for so long but it has begun to bother me. I have asked her if there is something wrong with how/when/where I touch her but she say's it's not me at all but she prefers giving me pleasure and receives pleasure from the giving.

Help! It feels good but I'm lonely at the bottom...

Dear **"Lonely...Bottom"** :
Your lover's insistence on <u>only</u> pleasing you and not expecting or desiring your touch is a symptom of the ever so frightening **"the last dyke"** syndrome. Many **'tops'** <u>think</u> they have a greater amount of power/control in a relationship because they control the pleasure...

It's a power-trip and a lonely one at that... Because if the truth be told - and you know I 'm gonna tell you the truth - **'bottoms'** REALLY have the power! Not only do we get what we need but we also get it without asking...(and if you gotta ask so what? That's about all you have to do ...if you get my drift)

Now I know you think this sounds selfish and all that but hey – think about it ...if you're with a woman who doesn't want to share her body – what else isn't she sharing? (Only you know the answer to that, honey)

Ms. Vulva cont;

Think about the fundamental healthiness of this relationship – but in the meantime you need to be on the look out for a real lover- not a stereotype.

Ms.Vulva's Gem: Remember – where there's a dyke there's always a drama.
When Ms. Vulva is not minding other dykes' business, she can be found searching for some drama of her own.

Need a solution to a drama? Write to Ms. Vulva c/o ZAMI at PO Box 2502, Decatur, GA 30031

SISTAH PROFILE

Meet ZAMI member TANISHA!

She hails from Spartanburg, South Carolina and moved here in August, 1995 to be closer to her girlfriend who lived in Athens. They subsequently split and Tanisha is currently single.

"At the age of 26, I'm ready to meet my life partner, build a future together and have children." Tanisha expressed frustration with the dating scene here, and the difficulty in meeting women outside of the bars.

Meanwhile, she works in sales at a local bank while attending night school at Mercer University for a teacher's certificate in English. "Although, I have a degree in English with a concentration in Journalism ,it's always been my dream to teach English at the high school level."

Tanisha will be finished with her requirements in June and is undecided about staying in Atlanta. "I'm an only child and I miss my mom. We have always been very close and she affirms me in my life choices."

Tanisha came out to her mother in a pretty unique way. "I went home to visit and she commented on my shoes. 'I told her that my girlfriend had bought them.'

She said you mean your friend and I said no, I mean my girlfriend and she said so you're like that and I said yeah, I'm like that. She laughed and that was that. "

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ZAMI MEMBERS:

Hannah- Oct 1
Iris- Oct 9
Pamela- Oct 19
Robin- Nov 4

HOROSCOPE

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22)
Happy birthday, October Scorpios! People may respond favorably to your courage and enterprise this month, but impulsiveness may override your reason. Even if you are the responsible type, you won't be careful now. You could have some problems with your reputation, and your attitude may arouse rivalries and criticism.

You are better able to put others at ease this month. You're attracted to artistic, unique people, and would be fairly comfortable working with groups, clubs, other organizations. You can gain social success and popularity through your friends, but don't let socializing take too much of your time.

Courtesy of American Astrology Magazine.

ANTONIA'S CORNER

HARD- The Wounded Healer

I. Hard/ my calling card

I am hip-hop.
I hold it down for my block,
while holding up the subway walls
of the orange line on my way down
South to made some greenery.
See, no one ever saw me
on my working to middle-class block.
And they saw even less of me
as my family moved from
one more middle-class neighborhood
to the next.
But now I appear in pastel colors,
with a lock on hip-hop
and a stare practiced on empty
subway chairs.
And this is for all my people.

II. Soft and smooth, I ain't with it/ Hardcore...

You know me.
I'm all up in Macy's looking for a
deal on a pair of flare leg pants.
Or , I'm at the boutique
picking up a hand woven purse
from Guatemala,
'cause I gotta have something
lovingly made
by colored folks in someone's
America.
Hey, I've got culture, style and
consciousness.
And I've got a secret smile that
spreads like Sunday morning butter.
I've got a walk that keeps the fellas
looking.
And I've got AIDS.
This AIDS thing be trying to kick
my ass.
And I kick it right back.
Don't get me wrong,
I haven't always been able to see
my way through the bars
of what most people had said was a
death sentence.

HARD cont;

Sometimes I felt like giving in.
But I'm not going to offer my life
on some white man made,
god-jealous,
quick fix to the undesirables trip.
And I'm certainly not going to die
behind my rejection by
my black people,
hiding behind my black church,
using it to hide
our self-hatred.
Nor will I choose from the other
delectable blackman poisons:
crack, guns and alcohol,
a necrophilic's shopping list
for conspicuous consumption.
No, this black queen is going to get
his life!
I call on the strength of that orisha
who so loved her men-loving
brothers that she became their
protector.
She knows me, too.

III. Posing like you're hard, when really you're quite vaginal

Look,
I don't even know if I have the
energy to talk to you.
What you really need to do is read.
But since you seem to be listening,
let me tell you how it went down.
I'm from the French Quarter,
born and raised a Southerner, thank
you. Grew up a movement baby
and haven't stopped moving since.
How can I stop moving
when there's still so much work to
be done?
I can tell you this much,
if I stop to sit down
I might not ever get back up.
So like Mama Roxie and Ti Bev
before me,
I keep walking this path
partially out of fear of the effect
gravity may have on my body
if I stopped its forward motion.
Don't get around to the Quarter
much anymore,
not since I had to kill all those
people.
Had to kill half of the movement
folks
and a whole tribe of friends.
I even had to kill my pa,
which was the hardest.
Oh, I don't mean I killed them
physically; that may have been
easier. Besides, I believe in non-
violent solutions.
No, I had to deaden them in my
soul. Had to burn them off
like a doctor does the sixth finger
on a newborn's hand. Except, I had
to apply the flame myself. I lit the
first match with feminism. Don't
you know,
when I started talking that women's
liberation stuff, eyes that were
formerly crackling with interest
cooled out.
Then, mouths would form to tell
me: ***The struggle has got to be prioritized and black people's first fight in America is against racism.***
Uh huh.
Tell that to the next woman who is
beaten by a man
while he calls her a
"broke, ugly, black bitch."
And she'll tell you that her particular
combination
wasn't winning any lotteries.
But what really brought me to sear
my extra digit off
was when I got deep,
I mean
up-to-the-tip-nose-deep,
into the pussy.
Lord yeah, that useless finger came
right off then.
Like any major operation
performed without an anesthetic,
it was an almost maddeningly
painful process.
Bur once my love for women
came out of the theoretical
and into the sheets and streets,
looked like the movement had no
more use for me anyhow.
So before my hand could
come
to steal my blackness,
saying it no longer belonged to me,
I burned my traitorous finger all the
way to the nub.
Now I have
brand new
black/feminist /dyke/hands,
which I continue to give to the
struggle.

IV. I dreamt that I was hard.

It was more like a wakeful
nightmare.
You are supposed to be given relief
from what torments you in dreams
by waking.
But both states, sleep and
wakefulness,
leave me without rest.
And I fear death would be no
different, that the horror will follow
me into the hereafter.
That fear and sheer habit
keep me waking up every morning.
I am a survivor.
I survived the holocaust
that never makes it into historical
books, because it is always current.
I revisited the middle passage
when I was forced from
the promised land of my girlhood,
to an alien and brutal adult shore.
Wars don't make provisions for
childhood, so I never felt young.
The war was fought, as many wars
are,
for ignoble reasons.
The war was fought because a
terrified and angry people,
women,
had sworn allegiance to men
who were equally as terrified and
angry.
Only the men were given more
permission to express their venom.
My body and soul were the
battleground for their rages

HARD cont;
against youth, femaleness, and blackness.
As usual, there were the atrocities of war, the unspeakable acts.
But as I said, I am a survivor.
I survived for the very reason I was persecuted, because of my spirit.
Those people who wanted to level me, they wanted to know the limits of human endurance.
They needed to prove that a child, black and female at that,
could not be stronger than they themselves felt.
So they tried every manner of torture they could think of,
in an effort to test their hypothesis.
And when I would not betray my intrinsic worth
by politely dying,
they were pushed to an even greater vigilance. My survival has not been without its costs, however.
I had to give up feeling for other people
to the exact measure
that I had to give up feeling for myself in order to survive.
I left my tears behind when
I escaped from that alien place.
And so the nightmare perpetuates itself.

V. Fuck being hard, Posdnous is complicated.

You see me, right.
Oversized jeans and boots, hands in my pocket,
and ready for whatever.
You've seen my people too;
the cutey, the fire brand and the hard rock.
There are a whole bunch more like them.
Well me, my thing is that I'm into women.
But the only women I can abide are as mean as fuck.
Gotta make me hurt hard for it to feel right.
It's getting complicated, though.
I'm trying to stop chasing after emotional wreckage
like some crazed accident claims lawyer.
I was trying to toughen up
through a steady diet of pain.
I know, you thought I was tough.
Well, I am.
But, I'm soft too.
Lots of time all I really want is to be held
and trust that the woman who is holding me
means me no harm.
Talk about tough,
it's hard to find the ability to be so expressive when the City seems to ask you
to have your game face on all the time. People act as if everybody is running a hustle,
from the preacher to the pusher.
It's like in order to stay here,
we had to lose faith in each other.
The openness ends up being
the look that no well dressed face wants to be caught wearing.
There's an entire body that comes with hardness, too.
And while I inherited a stroll from my dad, I've also got breasts, hips and a vulva.
This trinity forms a gap
right down the center of my tough girl armor.
No matter where else I'm hard,
those will always be my soft spots.
But I'm starting to enjoy the softness. When I finally started crying again, I was relieved to be able to feel.
After years of staring down pain with a straight face,
my face had begun to freeze that way.
I took my tears as a sign of thawing.
Next up has been the reclamation of my trinity for my own pleasure.
I liberated 'em from the strip club cages of other people's minds.
Now I watch,
as the hard and soft try to form a balanced whole.
And the weary wounded healers try to find ways to administer alms,
without returning to the circumstances
that first gave them power.
And it don't stop.
But since you know hip-hop,
you already know that.

Antonia Randolph is a May, 1996 graduate of Spelman College. She is currently working as a Development Intern in Fund Raising at the Southern Center for Human Rights.

Her poem Hard-The Wounded Healer was recently on exhibit at King Plow Arts Center as a collaborative piece with Wendi O'Neal portraying images of rap music and hip-hop culture.

Antonia will be performing on Wednesday, Nov 13 at Dekalb College's Central Campus in the H Bldg. at the Black light Cafe. This will be an evening of prose and poetry with an urban hip- hop flavor.

FOREPLAY

A novella by Deardria Nesbitt
Self- Published pp69
Excerpts can be purchased at Charis Bookstore.

This story opens with a brief but steamy interlude between Ronne and Seville ... Ronne is a rich and powerful record executive and Seville is the insatiable and sexy woman married to Ronne's uncle. Their desire for each other is eclipsed only by their desire for CheyAnta-the novella's central character. CheyAnta's is a newly rich yet influential record label owner.
She is a power hitter who knows how to play the game and win amongst-traditionally all-white, mostly all-male but seldom straight-music industry executives.
Chey Anta's struggle to maintain her independence and identify are the main themes of this tale.

Reviewed by Michelle Smith

ASK THE DOC is a new monthly column devoted to answering basic medical questions. It is not meant to take the place of a doctor's visit.

Dear DOC:

Th e woman that I love is HIV positive. I am HIV negative, and I insist on having unprotected sex to show her that I'm not afraid of her and to prove my love. When I make love, I want to feel her body--a dental dam or saran wrap just isn't natural or erotic. Besides, lesbians can't get AIDS from each other--right?

Signed,

Unprotected and Feeling Good!

Dear **Unprotected:**

Engaging in unsafe sex is not the true test of love for an HIV+ partner. How can you fully love another woman when you don't love yourself enough to protect yourself?

It is a commonly held MYTH that women who have sex with women can not get AIDS. Yet, cases have been reported in the medical literature since 1984 describing transmission of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, between women.

LESBIANS GET AIDS.

It is not clear how many women have been infected by their female partners because the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has not kept statistics specifically on woman to woman transmission. Lesbians are placed in "No Identified Risk" category or in categories describing other risk behaviors. (E.g., a lesbian IV drug user would be in the category of IV drug user.)

Since we are invisible in the AIDS epidemic, many lesbians believe that we are not at risk for HIV/AIDS and engage in risky behaviors, but it is precisely our behavior that is more important than the group to which we belong.

What we DO is more important than who we are. LOW RISK DOES NOT EQUAL NO RISK.

Here are the FACTS:

HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, is transmitted when blood, vaginal fluids, breast milk or semen from an HIV infected person enters your blood stream. Whether behavior is safe or unsafe depends on the chances of your partner's bodily fluids coming into contact with your blood.

-- Unprotected oral sex is risky especially if your partner is on her period or if she has a vaginal infection. If a woman is HIV positive, menstrual blood and vaginal secretions contain HIV.

To make sex safer, cover your partner's genital area (vulva) with a dental dam, plastic wrap (Handi-wrap, Saran wrap), or cut open a condom.

--Sores or cuts on fingers, mouth or vagina of either partner increases the risk of transmission during vaginal play (finger fucking), or (fisting).

--Sex toys are safer when used by you alone but if you share--put a condom on that vibrator, dildo, etc.

--Wet kissing can be risky if one or both of you have a sore or cut in your mouth or bleeding gums. Wait an hour after brushing or flossing your teeth before kissing.

As lesbians we can also take care of ourselves by talking to our partners before having sex--in the medical world we call it "taking a sexual history."

Ask her if she has engaged in any risky behavior--drug use, especially

IV drug use, sharing needles, etc. Has she had sex with a "high risk partner" (HIV+ woman or man, IV drug user)? **(Yes some lesbians have sex with men and shoot drugs)**
Remember it's what we do that's important not who we are).

Has she been tested for HIV? and get tested yourself. Get at least two HIV tests 3-6 months apart with no unsafe sex or otherwise risky behavior in between.

REFERENCES:

Poteat, Tonia. AIDS and Black Lesbians: Barriers to Safer Behavior, 1993.

L.A. Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center Home Page (www.safersex. org/women/lesbianss.html)

Dr. Edith Biggers specializes in treating patients who are HIV+ and have AIDS and yes she does have patients who are lesbians.

Please send basic medical questions to **ASK THE DOC** c/o ZAMI at PO Box 2502 Decatur, GA 30031

ATLANTA LESBIAN CANCER INITIATIVE

Support group for lesbians with cancer and their partner...

Scholars estimate that there may be a higher incidence of cancer among lesbians. As lesbians we have become concerned about the number of lesbian friends who have been diagnosed with cancer. When these friends were offered assistance through support groups, the groups were predominantly white heterosexual individuals. Our friends

Cancer Initiative cont;

talked with us about their need to talk about their lives as lesbians living with cancer, yet felt unsafe revealing themselves as lesbians in a predominantly white heterosexual support group. As a result, we have organized a community group, the Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative and our goal is to provide a safe environment for lesbians with cancer and their partners.

WHERE AND WHEN WE MEET

In keeping with providing a safe environment, we are offering the group at no charge in an office at Charis Books and More, a local feminist book store. Charis serves as a meeting place for many programs and organizations in the lesbian community. The support group began meeting in early October and is co-facilitated by an African-American lesbian who is a licensed counselor and a white lesbian who is a professor of nursing with a background in counseling.

REFERRALS TO THE GROUP

Lesbians with cancer may refer themselves or may be referred to the group by calling the Initiative at **404-651-2866.** A group facilitator will return the call and conduct a brief telephone interview in order to describe the group and obtain information about the potential participant. She will be given the time, place and directions to the group, should she choose to participate.

Participants may invite their partners to attend the group if they desire.

DONATIONS

Please make Tax exempt donation to the Fund for Southern Communities, 547 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE, Suite 100, Atlanta, GA 30308 Please specify the Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative as the recipient.

CULTURALHAPPENINGS

ART

AGNES SCOTT COLLEGE PRESENTS 3 WOMEN: ARTISTS/ EDUCATORS: DIANE EDISON, APRIL KATZ AND VIRGINIA SCOTCHIE Sunday, Nov 3 through Sunday, December 8, 1996,Opening Reception, Nov 3, 2- 4:30pm. Call 404-638-6368

African-American Improvisational Quilt Exhibition **High Museum** thru 2/1/1997 For more infor call 404-738-HIGH

"LOVE LABOR LOST"explores love and its ties to gender, class and race. **City Gallery@ Chastain** call 404-257-1804

THEATRE

ZAMI is organizing a group to see JOMANDI'S Production of **"for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf"** on Sunday, Nov 3 @ 3pm. The cost is $15 but we have ads for $2 off full price.
If interested, call Mary Anne by Nov 1.

FILM

THE11th **LATIN AMERICAN** FILM FESTIVAL – High Museum of Art
SECRETS & LIES- Garden Hills
BIG NIGHT- Tara 4
GET ON THE BUS- Midtown 8
BOUND- Phipps Plaza

SOUNDS

VARIETY PLAYHOUSE:
Tuck&Patti- Nov 6
Saffire:The Uppity Blues Women-Nov 16
THE OMNI:
Melissa Etheridge- Nov 13

SPORTS

Women's Professional BASKETBALL-**The Atlanta Glory** home opener is 4 p.m. Sat., October 26 at the Georgia State Arena. Tickets on Sale for only $10 call 404-249-6400

MIND AND BODY

Afrocentric Self-Enpowerment Support Group, workshops and retreats for Black women who seek personal, financial and spiritual liberation. Call 770-493-1127

READINGS

November Programs of note at **CHARIS BOOKS** 404-524-0304

Thursday, Nov 7: 5-7pm- **THE SPIRITUAL TAROT**

Thursday, Nov 14: 7:30pm- **A NIGHT OF LESBIAN READINGS WITH ELENA SHERMAN**

Friday, Nov 15: 7:00pm-10:00pm- **AN INFORMAL EVENING WITH bell hooks**

Thursday, Nov 21: 7:30pm- **MEMORY MAMBO: READINGS, LATINA STYLE**

Friday, Nov 22: 8:00pm- **SEX SERIES: SEX TOYS. WOMEN ONLY EVENT!**

ZAMI

STEERING COMMITTEE

MARY ANNE ADAMS
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NEWSLETTER COLLECTIVE:

MARY ANNE ADAMS

MILLICENT GOODWIN

MICHELLE SMITH

Questions? Comments, Suggestions...

Call ZAMI at 404 370-1392

or write

PO BOX 2502

DECATUR, GA 30031

OPEN HOUSE

Please join **ZAMI** members **Maria and Lisa** at an open house at their store, **MORE THAN A NOTION, Inc., on Sunday, October 27, 1996** from 12 noon until 5pm. Eracism tanks and shorts will be **1/2 price.** They are located inside **"OBVIOUS CHOICES"** at 122 Avondale Road, Avondale Estates.

Please call **404-294-0740**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Friday, November 8 from 7-10 pm., The Charis Circle sponsors **COOKING WITH HONEY @** Central Congregational Church on Clairmont Road. The Charis Circle will celebrate **Charis 22nd birthday** and the publication of **Cooking with Honey: What Literary Lesbians Eat** with an evening of good food and fine writing.

There is a $10 donation for the event and proceeds go to the Charis Circle, the non-profit organization responsible for Charis Thursday evenings and other programming. **Call 404-524-0304** for more infor.

Saturday and Sunday, November 9 and 10—all day!!!

CHARIS 22ND BIRTHDAY PARTY AND SALE!

Come out and enjoy; there will be food, drink and 10% off everything in the store.

ZAMI MEETINGS....

Don't forget the potluck on **Sunday, Oct 27** from 4-7 pm. Please bring a dish- **cook it, buy it, grow it- we don't care!**

The 2nd Sunday meeting on **Nov 10** will be at **Edith and Mary Anne's** home due to a scheduling conflict at our meeting space. The film will start promptly at **4:10 pm.** Their address is 783 N. Parkwood Road, Decatur 404-370-1392 or 404-378-5865

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

ZAMI, Inc.

FOR AND ABOUT LESBIANS OF AFRICAN DESCENT LIFTING UP, HOLDING UP EACH OTHER AND OUR COMMUNITY

Name _____

Address _____

Phone_____Pager_____

Date of Birth _____

Occupation _____

How did you find out about ZAMI?

_____

Skills and Talents I would like to contribute to ZAMI :

_____

I have enclosed a check for $ 35/year or an installment amount for _____

May we call you for volunteer work ?
Yes ___ no _____

ZAMI

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 4 ATLANTA'S PREMIERE AFRICAN- AMERICAN LESBIAN ORGANIZATION
FEBRUARY- MARCH 1997

ZAMI AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS!

"Acknowledged, our dreams can shape the realities of our future, if we arm them with the hard work and scrutiny of now" Audre Lorde

In January 1997, ZAMI became the first African-American lesbian organization in the country to dispense scholarship funds. Founded in 1990, ZAMI is named for the biomythography, **"ZAMI- A New Spelling of My Name"**, written by Audre Lorde in 1982.

The Scholarship is named in honor of Audre Lorde, State Poet of New York who defined herself as a black lesbian, warrior poet. Audre is internationally regarded as a significant contributor to the struggle for women's liberation and lesbian and gay rights. Audre's voice was stilled at the age of 58 when she died of cancer in November, 1992.

The Annual Audre Lorde Scholarship Fund was created in November 1995 with a goal of awarding three $1000 dollar scholarships in recognition and support of outstanding African-American (out) lesbians who are attending a two or four year College or University in Georgia.

To apply, you must complete an application form. Finalists are selected on the basis of the application, a personal interview and a 750 word essay detailing academic plans and the value of Audre Lorde's work and her legacy.

If fewer than 3 applications are received for consideration by the Steering Committee, the remaining money will roll over for the next annual scholarship fund.

We are pleased to announce that the first recipients are Wendi O'Neal and Akeya Works:

Wendi O'Neal is a Fine Arts major at Spelman College and a local community activist. She graduates this May. Wendi plans to pursue a graduate degree in the near future. In the interim, she will continue her work as a Resident Assistant at the Women's Resource Center Against Domestic Violence.

Wendi feels that her art has sustained her and that her work 'informs' her social activism.

Akeya Works is a second year student at Georgia State University - School of Business, majoring in Marketing. Akeya considers herself a role model for her younger sister and emphasizes the importance of education, self-development, and discipline.

Upon graduation, Akeya intends to establish her own Public Relations firm called - "The Works".

Inside This Issue

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2/3	Reading & Party for KATHY MORRIS- Book Review: SPEAKING IN WHISPERS Dykes Against Drama
	Poetry: *Sista feels: my blackwomyn poem*
4	Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative — Happy Birthday
5	Cultural Happenings,
6/7	Herstory-BULLDAGGER BLUES : THE GLADYS BENTLEY STORY
8	Support your ZAMI Sistas

ZAMI Presents...

New York Author Kathleen E. Morris

Reading from her collection of African-American Lesbian Erotica -

Speaking in Whispers

on
Saturday. February 22. 1997 at 9:00 p.m.
at
828 W. Peachtree St
Suite 206
Atlanta

$5.00 admission for non-members

Come as you are or dress in your favorite

Erotic Fantasy Wear

HOT FEMALE DJ
DANCIN!
BEER & WINE

Toy bag give away for hottest erotic attire!

WOMYN ONLY EVENT! — ALL WOMYN WELCOME.

BOOK REVIEW

Speaking in Whispers: African-American Lesbian Erotica by Kathleen Morris; paper, $11.95

Kathleen Morris' collection of lesbian erotica is the first nationally published collection of erotica by an African-American lesbian and it contains very readable and visual stories. Good erotica is hard to write. The writer must be concerned not only with literary elements that make any good-- short- fiction such as theme, character development, cogency, sense of rhythm, and style, but also with getting some type of reaction, i.e. "rise" from the reader. Morris' work does just that.

In "The Spa", a young businesswoman on vacation at a North Carolina resort finds more than just a body and mind calming massage at the hands of Marisol, the masseuse. "Pongee" is the story of Kimberly who, while on business in New York revisits a bar where in her youth she had admired the very hot, very sensuous Pongee, a Native American woman. Pongee's reappearance brings them both to a place they left many years before but this time they get to spend one very fulfilling evening together. In "The Exit" a couple who have been together for a few months have a very hot rendezvous at one of their homes and discover that there are many ways to have a romantic and sexually sizzling evening.

Again, good erotica is often hard to find. Morris' stories certainly are in good erotica category and they do get a reaction. If the reader reaches for the vibrator...well, that's one possible reaction. It's very refreshing to see positive, sensitive and hot representations of African-American lesbianism in print. **Speaking in Whispers** is more than worth the $12 cover charge.

Reviewed by Iris Rafi. Iris is the treasurer of ZAMI and a graduate of Emory University with a Ph.D. in American Studies and Women's Studies.

DYKES AGAINST DRAMA: A MONTHLY ADVICE COLUMN

Dear **Ms. Vulva:**

Valentine's Day is fast approaching and I am still single! I thought for sure that I would find a lover at one of the numerous parties and affairs I attended this past season.

It seems as though being good-looking, employed, smart, witty and kind are not traits that women here are attracted to. When I first moved to this area, one wise woman told me **"don't drink the water"** . From what I have seen, the water here is pretty stagnant! What's up?!

Parched on Piedmont

Dear Parched...

Welcome to Atlanta! Home of the **"Georgia Peach"...** you know that famous fruit that is all warm, red and just about to pop...believe me , the home - grown sisters from Georgia are all just about to ripen.. but have

a way to go before they are ready to be plucked. **See Women on Women workshop--**details on page 8.

What can I tell you, darlin I've lived here for over 5 years and I have managed to survive. I **"don't drink the water"** because my own experiences have told me that just because a woman reads lesbian, dates lesbian and clubs lesbian doesn't mean she is a lesbian.

There are too many 'wanna be's in Atlanta... so keep this in mind the next time you are approaching or approached by a sister-girl in the 'club'!

Dear Ms. Vulva:

I have a problem that is kind of embarrassing and I need your advice. I think my situation could get worse. I got a fabulous toy for myself for Christmas, it hits the **'spot'** if you know what I mean. Well anyway, my girlfriend has seen me in action with it. I've named my toy-**Honey.** Guess what? My partner is jealous!

I've suggested that she join in, use it on me/with me etc, but to no avail. Even though she won't admit that she's jealous-she's acting crazy...whenever she comes home she checks it to see if it's warm, just yesterday she hid it from me!...

I am desperate to know what I should do. I don't understand her unreasonable behavior-needless to say, I have already ordered another **"honey"** but it will be two weeks before it arrives.

What should I do about my girlfriend in the meantime? I need to please my Sweet Tooth.

Dear Sweet...

First of all, **why don't you have more than one sex toy?** Second of all, isn't your girlfriend satisfying you without the 'special effects'? Third, can you give me the name/address/telephone number of the company you order your goods from, I think I might want to check out some of their wares.

Listen, tell girlfriend that the toy isn't taking her place, it-I mean **Honey,** (I'm sorry) is just fulfilling your needs when she is not there, and in order for her to know what she is jealous of (and I do think she is jealous) she should try it... who knows

"Honey" may not float her boat, but on the other hand she may enjoy herself and then the two of you can play... but seriously, you girls probably need to explore toys, and other erotica together, so she doesn't feel left out.

Ms.Vulva's Gem: **"Where there's a dyke there's a drama."**

When **Ms. Vulva** is not minding other DYKES' business, she can be found searching for some drama of her own.

Need a solution to a drama? Write to **Ms. Vulva** c/o ZAMI at PO Box 2502, Decatur, GA 30031

sista feels: my blackwomyn poem

i like the way the word
'sista'
feels in my mouth,
like perfectly round
green grapes as you bite them ..

i like the way the word
'sista'
sounds crashing,
like waves
or cymbals
or bangles on the arms of
a dancer i used to know . . .
'sista' can be found in the soft
and kinky
of the afro and the natty dread
or the lift and lay of the
asymmetrical 'do . . .

and 'sista' created attitude:
signifyin
finga snappin
and 5 year old girls singin
"*sophisticated la-a-ady*,
everybody get up . . ."

and 'sista' will call you out,
tell you all about yourself
if she don' t like how you treat her
or someone she loves . . .

and 'sista' is the one whose eyes
remind you of your mother's
when you win
even though you were
competing against her . . .

and 'sista' is what you call her
when she accepts in you what
you can't,
or when she needs you and tells
you so,

or when she gets you laughin so
hard
you think you gonna break
somethin,
gets you laughin so loud
you make other sistas
embarrassed . . .

'sista' is what you call her when
it' s been so long
you can' t remember not
knowing her,
or when you just met her
and you still can't imagine not
having her to call on . . .

i like the way the word
'sista'
feels in my
sista' s voice...

~~~mendi d. s.
lewis/buttafly~~~~~
August 1995

Mendi Lewis is a graduate of Spelman College and is currently enrolled in graduate school at Duke University in North Carolina.

"I am who I am, doing what I came to do, acting upon you like a drug or a chisel to remind you of your me-ness, as I discover you in myself."
AUDRE LORDE

ATLANTA LESBIAN CANCER INITIATIVE

The support group for lesbians with cancer is up and running. The group has 12 strong, committed participants who are at various stages of diagnosis and treatment. Some participants have chosen to include their partners in the group. The group is free of charge and open to any lesbian with cancer and her partner.

Most of the participants indicate that the group is important to them because they can relate to each other's experiences as lesbians. Facilitators for the group are Cheryl Strong, a National Board certified counselor and Linda McGehee, a certified advanced practice nurse in psychiatric-mental health. In addition, the group has two resource people, an oncology nurse and a breast cancer survivor/activist who are also members of the Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative.

If you or anyone you know could benefit from the cancer support group, please contact us at 404-651-2866. We need help in getting the word out to African-American lesbians with cancer and their partners. We would welcome your suggestions, comments or questions.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ZAMI SISTAS:

Wendi- Jan 21
Tanisha-Feb 22
Vikki-March 9
Yakini- March 28
Lisa- March 31

HOROSCOPES

AQUARIUS

1/20 - 2/18

Element: Air

Duality: Masculine

Ruling Planet: Uranus

Modality: Fixed

Aquarius, the water bearer, is a bit ahead of her time. She is usually a little eccentric or quirky - but friendships are very important to her so she's not anti- social. As a fixed sign Aquarians can be stubborn and determined. They often feel misunderstood and when these feelings are to the extreme- Acquariuns have the notion that people are against them or just don't like them.

Aquarians are the humanitarians of the zodiac. Their symbol, the water bearer, connotes the spilling forth of the life force and spiritual energy to human kind. They are truly kind folks. There is little affectation or snobbery in the Aquarius nature - in fact they find these characteristics distasteful.

PISCES

2/19 - 3/20

Element: Water

Duality: Feminine
~~~

Ruling Planet: Neptune and Jupiter

Modality: Mutable

Watery Pisces is the oldest sign of the natural zodiac. This position represents wisdom that is attained throughout a lifetime. Pisceans are feminine and mutable. They are very giving of themselves and tend to be open to change. They're quite sensitive and extremely responsive to the thoughts and feelings of others. These fish (the symbol for Pisces) are deeply committed to their partners - hearth and home are very important to them.

ARIES

3/20-4/20

Element: Fire

Modality: Cardinal

Ruling Planet: Mars

Duality: Masculine

Aries, the 1st sign of the zodiac, is and energetic and active sign. There is a restlessness and impulsiveness which leads Aries to jump right in to new ventures or put new ideas into action ASAP. Aries is a natural leader with plenty of confidence.

However, that confidence is borne of a tendency towards self-absorption. Being the 1st sign of the zodiac makes Aries the baby; as such they are concerned with the world only as it relates to them. Yet, like infants, they are irresistibly charming and their smiles contagious. Before you know it their aggressiveness is softened by their innocence, their fiery nature becomes warm instead of abrasive and you've become enamored

CULTURAL HAPPENINGS

HARAMBE

Come celebrate Black History with **IN THE LIFE ATLANTA** on Monday, February 17, 1997 at City Hall East- 675 Ponce De Leon Ave, NE in the Phoenix Room from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Ethnic attire requested

MC's :Mary Anne Adams, Chair- ZAMI and Victor Stewart, Chair- Brothers Back to Back

ART

"Tracing Cultures." Nexus Contemporary Art Center. Through March 22 404-688-1970

Prints by **"Alone in a Crowd: African-American Artists of the 1930s-40S."** Through March 23 High Museum 404-733-4444

"Atlanta Native American and Wildlife Art Festival, North Atlanta Trade Center. Through March 16 813-360-6060

READINGS

February Programs of note at **CHARIS BOOKS** 404-524-0304 All programs begin at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, Feb 13-**"Still in the Universe:"** A tribute to Toni Cade Bambara. Join Malaika Adero, Cheryl Chisolm, Akbar Imhotep, Sue Ross and others as they pay tribute to this literary giant.

Thursday, Feb 20-**SEX SERIES--**Kathleen Morris Speaks in Whispers- Kathleen is a NY based author who will read from her first published work, Speaking in Whispers. Womyn only event!!!!

Thursday, Feb 27-An Evening of Stories with Kelley Alexander- Kelley is an Atlanta based writer and will read from **"Maya's Lives"** her collection of short stories.

THEATRE

Feb 19-**"Zora"** opens. 7 Stages. Through Feb 23. 404-523-7647

SOUNDS

Feb 21- **Sweet Honey in the Rock** performs at Spelman's College Sister Chapel. Tickets are $25 and are available at Charis. Show starts at 7:00 p.m.

Feb 22- Jazz at Lincoln Center's **"Blood on the Fields."** Music and libretto by Wynton Marsalis. Fox Theatre 8 p.m. 404-881-2000.

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra performs Prokofiev's score to Sergei Eisenstein film,**"Alexander Nevsky."** Call 404-733-5000

FILM

Emory University's Office of Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Life will hold it's Fourth Annual L/G/B/T Film Festival Feb 20-22, 1997.
The festival will feature an appearance by filmmaker Riyad Vinci Wadia, who will screen his film **Bomgay**, the first indigenously produced gay film from India.
Also here to screen and discuss their film will be Kelly Anderson and Tami Gold, co-producers about lesbians and gay men on the job, **Out at Work,** which premiered at the 1997 Sundance Film Festival.

Of special interest is **B.D. Women** which celebrates the history and culture of Black

lesbians. Call 404-727-0272 for the schedule.

SPORTS

HOTLANTA HOOPS CITYWIDE TOURNAMENT
Sponsored by Sisters of 30 Something Special....

There will be **a citywide basketball tournament** held on March 8 and 9 at Morningside Baptist Church (1700 Piedmont Ave). The tournament will include four teams representing the Atlanta area.
March 8 features NE vs. NW @ 2 pm SE vs. SW @4 pm
Jae, a ZAMI sista will coach the SW team. March 9 will be the championship game.
Tickets are $5 per game. Call 404-350-9758

TRAVELING BACK INTO LESBIAN HERSTORY

GLADYS BENTLEY: THE BULLDAGGER WHO SANG THE BLUES- PART 11- cont from Volume I Issue 3

"One Hundred and Thirty Third Street was the real swing street," Holiday recalled. "It was jumping with after-hours spots, regular hour joints, restaurants, cafes, a dozen to a block." Bentley soon got her chance. When the pianist at the Mad House left for Europe on tour, Bentley rushed to the club for an audition. At first the owner was reluctant, but he was soon convinced to take a chance on the young lesbian. "When I had finished my first number, the applause was terrific... I was offered $35 a week and began to work on the spot."

Bentley was lucky to have entered show business at this time. Music historian Eileen Southern has called the 1920s "the era of the black female blues singer." Between 1920 and 1930, over 200 black women made recordings, and thousands more found employment as performers in nightclubs, theaters, and tent shows.

Among the successful were Bessie Smith, Ida Cox, Ethel Waters, and Ma Rainey. Bentley was entertaining and titillating, something the audiences of the Roaring Twenties craved.

After Carl Van Vechten and other white downtowners became regulars at the Mad House, her salary jumped to $100 a week. She played many of the most fashionable clubs, including the Cotton Club and Connie's Inn. As writer Langston Hughes remembered, Bentley "was something worth discovering in those days."

For two or three amazing years, Miss Bentley sat, and played a big piano all night long, literally all night, without stopping--singing songs like "The Saint James Infirmary," from ten in the evening until dawn, with scarcely a break between notes, sliding from one song to another, with a powerful and continuous underbeat of jungle rhythm. Miss Bentley was an amazing exhibition of musical energy--- a large, dark, masculine lady, whose feet pounded the floor while her fingers pounded the keyboard.

For several years, Bentley was the head-liner entertainer at Harry Hansberry's The Clam House where she performed in a white tuxedo and top hat. The Clam House was the favorite watering hole for a select crowd of sophisticates. Eslanda Robeson, wife of actor Paul Robeson, once raved to a friend, "Gladys Bentley is grand. I heard her three nights, and will never be the same." Harlem schoolteacher Harold Jackman noted, "When Gladys sing 'Saint James Infirmary,' it makes you weep your heart out."

White sophisticates found her equally fascinating. Vanity Fair's Charles Shaw described The Clam House as a" narrow room in Jungle Alley catering to a large white patron-age and featuring Gladys Bentley, pianist and torrid warbler. A popular house for revelers but not for the innocent young". He added that it was best after 1 a.m.

By the 1920's, Bentley name and reputation had become synonymous with "Hot Harlem." She was mentioned regularly in Louis Sobol's gossip column in *The New York Evening Graphic*. She appeared, unnamed but unmistakable, in Van Vechten's best-selling novel *Parties* and in Clement Wood's roman 'a clef *Deep River*.

In Blair Nile's 1931 gay male potboiler *Strange Brother,* Bentley appears as "Sybil," the black lesbian entertainer at Harlem's Lobster Pot."

"Soon I was living on Park Avenue in a $300 a month apartment," she later remembered. "I had servants and a beautiful car. The club where I worked overflowed with celebrities and big star names nightly...I had made my mark in show business."

In August 1928, Bentley began a recording career which would span two decades. Over the next eight months she cut eight titles for the Okeh recording company. Possibly because of copyright restrictions, Bentley didn't sing her notorious parodies. She appears to have accompanied herself on the piano, and was joined for two sessions by the white guitarist Eddie Lang. A year later she recorded a side with the Washboard Serenaders on the Victor label.

None of the material Bentley recorded dealt with lesbianism, but some of her songs reveal a subtle feminist perspective. She threatens to leave a wayward lover in "How Long, How Long Blues," asserting a strong sense of sexual and emotional independence.

A similar independence can be found in "Moanful Wailin' Blues."

Had a good daddy, He wouldn't treat me right. Checked him out on Thursday, Took him back on Friday night!

"How Much Can I Stand?" was Bentley's strongest recording. It describes a violent, exploitive relationship between Bentley and a male lover, her thoughts of murder, and her resolution to avoid such relationships in the future.

I've got a man I've loved all the while, But now he treats me like a darn stepchild, How much of that stuff can I stand? One time he said my sugar was oh, so sweet, But now for his dessert he goes across the street, How much of that stuff can I stand? Went down to the drugstore, asked the clerk for a dose, But when I received the poison, I eyed it very close, How much of this stuff can I stand? The next man I get must be guaranteed, When I walk down the aisle, you're gonna hear me scream, How much of that stuff can I stand?

A large part of Bentley's popularity was due to her novel appearance. Bentley personified the one identifiable black lesbian stereotype of the period: the tough -talking, masculine acting, cross-dressing, and sexually worldly "bull dagger."

This stereotype was spread in blues lyrics and contemporary fiction. Blues singer Lucille Bogan observed in her 1935 recording "B.D. [Bulldagger] Woman's Blues":

B.D. Women, they ain't gonna do me no good, B.D. Women, they ain't gonna do me no good, They can lay their jive just like a nach'l man. B.D. women, you know they sure is rough, B.D. Women, you know they sure is rough, They have drunk up many a whiskey and they sure can strut their stuff.

Bessie Smith puzzled over "mannish acting women " in her "Foolish Man Blues", and Gertrude "Ma" Rainey confessed she liked to "wear a collar and a tie" in her remarkable "Prove It On Me Blues".

Best-selling novels such as Claude McKay's *Home to Harlem,* Gilmore Millen's *Sweet Man,* and Blair Nile's *Strange Brother,* used black bulldaggers as fictive characters.

Of course , Bentley was not the only lesbian in the black entertainment field. Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, Ethel Waters and Alberta Hunter all maintained sexual and emotional involvements with women.

But the homosexuality that others hid, Bentley exploited to its full advantage. "She could be seen any day marching down Seventh Avenue attired in men's clothes," remembered writer Wilbur Young. "She seemed to thrive on the fact that her odd habits were the subject of much tongue wagging."

Columnist Louis Sobol remembered Bentley coming over to his table one night and whispering, "I'm getting married tomorrow and you're invited." When Sobol asked who the lucky man was to be, she giggled and replied: "Man? Why boy you're crazy. I'm marryin'---" and she named another woman singer.

Bentley later lived openly with her white lesbian lover and eventually married her in a highly publicized wedding ceremony.

Reprinted from OutLook/National Lesbian & Gay Quarterly, Spring 1988.

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BACK BY POPULAR

DEMAND!!

WOMEN ON WOMEN: A Workshop for Single, Lesbian Sista's in Search Of...

Are you trying to meet that special soulmate?

Need tips on 'surfing' the personals?

Or thinking about writing your own personal ad?

This workshop will focus on how to look for interesting women in interesting places. Also, tips on enhancing your social profile and skills.

Space limited-Please call **Carla Rabb,** Workshop Trainer for reservations at 404-589-9500. Next workshop is March 15th from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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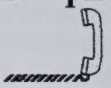
ZAMI has a new phone number!



404-370-0920

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS!!!!!

We need your poetry, short stories, essays,

editorials and anything else you would like to contribute to this newsletter.

Questions? Comments, Suggestions...

call the ZAMI LINE
or write
PO BOX 2502
DECATUR, GA 30031

DISCUSSIONS/PROGRAMS-
2ND SUNDAYS

POT - LUCK-
4TH SUNDAYS

4-6 PM AT 828 WEST PEACHTREE ST, SUITE 206.

ZAMI's WISH LIST:

Computer

Scanner

Paper for printing: any color/size

Postage stamps

Envelopes: No. 10

Clip Art Software

Catering Services

Cases of soft drinks

photo on page 2 by p. lindbergh

Newsletter for Atlanta's Premiere African-American Lesbian Organization

ZAMI OUTLook

Volume 2, Issue 1 WINTER 2005

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- Deadline to register for ZAMI's Sign Language Class
  Jan. 26
- DrumSista at Southern Womyn's Music Festival
  April 28– May 2
- Audre Lorde Scholarship Applications Deadline —
  May 15
- 10th Annual Audre Lorde Scholarship Program—
  Sept. 17th

Visit our website for more info

ZAMI, n.

A Carriacou word meaning women who work together as friends and lovers. The name ZAMI also honors the late Audre Lorde.

Inside this issue:

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ZAMI Awarded Record Number of Scholarships in 2004!

ZAMI awarded a record-breaking 21 scholarships at the 9th Annual Audre Lorde Scholarship Program. The recipients were:

Erica Woodland, Graduate School, Social Work—The Sheryl Burke Award

Tajuana Kebo Drew, Undergraduate, Creative Writing/English—The Pat Parker Award funded by Io Cyrus

Preston Shumaker, Graduate, Clinical Psychology—The Ruth Ellis Award funded by Wendy Belkin

Jonathan Ann Jones, Undergraduate, Nursing—The Cherie Caldwell Award

Stephanie Forbes, Undergraduate, Creative Writing—The Sheryl Burke Award

Eldrige Holloway, Graduate, Conflict Management—The Cherie Caldwell Award

Lynnee Bonner, Graduate, Ethnic Studies—The Sheryl Burke Award

Craig Washington, Undergraduate, Social Work—The Bayard Rustin Award funded by Allen Thornell

Shelley Barry, Graduate, Film & Media Arts—The Ruth Ellis Award funded by Wendy Belkin

Xanthia Johnson, Graduate, Community Counseling—The Sherry Turner Award

Lauren McCray, Undergraduate, Psychology—The Edith Biggers-Kathi Martin Award

Shelton Jackson, Undergraduate, Accounting—The Tony Daniels Community Ally Award funded by ADODI Muse

Kazem Abdullah, Graduate, Conducting Performance—The Ronald Moore Humanitarian Award

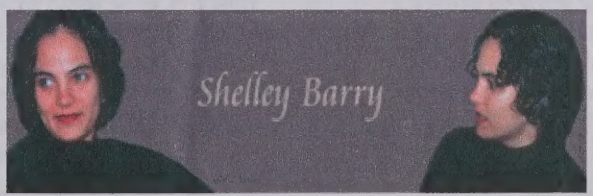
Olayinka Majekodunmi, Undergraduate, Public Health Education—The Margaret Ntombi Howell Power & Presence Memorial Award , funded by Rhesa M. Jenkins & Ama R. Saran

Brandi-el Cook, Undergraduate, Law; Medicine—The Hannah Guishard Award

Continued on Page 3

Spotlight: Scholarship Recipient "Shelley" Barry

Disabled in the Taxi Wars in 1996, Shelley Barry became active in disability politics and coordinated national policy for Disabled People, South Africa, in Parliament for two years. Barry is a member of New Moon Ventures, a women's theater collective and is currently working on a play called, *Spinning Wheels.*



Barry is a Graduate student of Film and Media Arts at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She received the Ruth Ellis Award, which is funded by Wendy Belkin.

Newsletter for Atlanta's Premiere African-American Lesbian Organization

ZAMI OUTLook

Volume 2, Issue 1 WINTER 2005

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Shelton Jackson, Undergraduate, Accounting—The Tony Daniels Community Ally Award funded by ADP/DI Music

Azeem Abdullah, Graduate, Conducting Performance—The Ronald Moore Human Service Award

Olaytrelq Maize-Rodoumni, Undergraduate, Public Health Education—The Margaret Nemko Howell Power & Presence Memorial Award, funded by Eboen M. Jenkins & Ann R. Baran

Brandi-el Cook, Undergraduate, Law, Alcohol and Drug Abuse—The Hannah Davis Award

Edrielyn Bellonery, Graduate, Conflict Management—The Cherie Caldwell Award

Tyrone Barnes, Graduate, Graduate Studies—The Sheryl Burke Award

Chris Woodland, Graduate, Social Work—The Ruth Ellis Award funded by Allen Thornhill

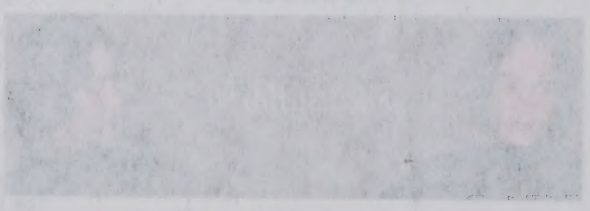
Shelley Barry, Graduate, Film & Media Arts—The Ruth Ellis Award funded by Wendy Bolkin

Xenobia Johnson, Graduate, Community Counseling—The Sheryl Turner Award

Lauren McCray, Undergraduate, Psychology—The Edith Rogers-Ruth Martin Award

Continued on Page 6

Spotlight: Scholarship Recipient "Shelley" Barry



Barry is a graduate student at Film and Media Arts at Temple University in Philadelphia. Originally from Sylvania, she received the Ruth Ellis Award, which is funded by Wendy Bolkin

Barry was published in the Toxi Wave in 1998. She loved by Barry because of her active in community activities and national politics for Democratic Peoples Republic, South Africa, in Parliament for two

Barry is a member of a play called, Sparrow Women's theater collective and is currently working

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- Deadline to register for ZAMI's Sign Language Class

Jan. 26

- Drumsticks at Southern Womyn's Music Festival

April 28– May 2

- Audre Lorde Scholarship Applications Deadline —

May 15

- 10th Annual Audre Lorde Scholarship Program—

Sept. 17th

Visit our website for more info

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Adams Resigns As ZAMI's Executive Director

As of December 31, 2004, Mary Anne Adams, long time Executive Director of ZAMI, vacated the position. No replacement will be named.

Adams had been with ZAMI since 1990—first as a member, then as Board Chair and then ultimately took on the responsibilities of Executive Director, in a volunteer capacity, in 1997.

Mary Anne Adams

She was instrumental in building the organization in a number of areas; of the most far-reaching is founding the Audre Lorde Scholarship Fund, which, to date, has given away 70 $1,000.00 scholarships to out Black lesbians and gay men enrolled in colleges across the country. Adams increased the organization's visibility by designing and implementing the ZAMI website; producing a number of events and functions that showcased the talents of many lesbians and gay men locally and nationally; and starting Drum-Sista, a drumming group for lesbians of color.

Adams' commitment to building community and fostering relationships with other organizations led her to involve ZAMI as co-sponsor of a number of important events, including: The Atlanta Premiere of A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde; the Annual Bayard Rustin rally; he first lesbian and gay Black History Celebration at Spelman College; and a weekend retreat on internalized homophobia with funding from the Fund for Southern Communities.

Because of Adams' and ZAMI's demonstrated commitment to the leadership development of young women, the organization has been the recipient of several local and national grants to provide equal access for all lesbians.

Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative Hires ZAMI Member

12 Things About Simone Bell

Is a Detroit native and has lived in Atlanta for 15 years

Has been with her partner, Valarie, for just as long

Is especially grateful to Kelley Alexander, whom she has also known for 15 years, for always believing in her, sometimes even more than she believed in herself

Is currently raising her 3 school-aged nephews: Tyler, Brandon & Joshua

Was the recipient of a ZAMI scholarship for three consecutive years

Enjoys taking adventurous vacations

Previously served on the ZAMI board

Attended Fisk University, then began studying at Agnes Scott College, where she was faced with diversity, which allowed her to see the best and worst of people

Has always worked in health care, but also enjoys writing and working in the queer community

Serves as the Outreach & Volunteer Manager for ALCI

Strongly urges everyone to "Hold on to our right to vote and believe"

Quote of the day: "ZAMI can make you think you can do anything"

Poetry Corner

Poems By Tracey Foxworth

Twin Souls

Others vie for my attention but only you occupy my thoughts by wandering into them like an old friend.

You are the only one I desire to love freely.

I want to color your life with passion, methodically uncover layer by layer, creep inch by inch into your mind, penetrate your heart with uninhibited love, slowly and soothingly make love to your soul and weave it all into a tapestry of tranquility that will cover you daily with sensuality.

I want to walk with you down red-carpeted paths covered with petals of orchids and colored roses to a table by the sea, set for three, Spirit,
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"I work for the under-represented, and as far as I am concerned, it is a ministry. I try to empower my clients with information so that they can make intelligent decisions about their rights," says Burke. She continues, "My goal is to have a positive impact on all of them."

Body: Sheryl strives to live a productive and healthy life. She follows a path of holistic health and maintains a lifestyle of exercise by walking and playing tennis. She is a vegetarian and grows most of her vegetables in her own backyard.

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Scholarships Awarded, continued from page 1

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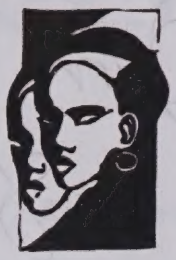
NEWSLETTER FOR ATLANTA'S PREMIERE AFRICAN-AMERICAN LESBIAN ORGANIZATION

ZAMI, Inc.
P.O. Box 2502
Decatur, Georgia 30031

Phone: 404-370-0920

www.zami.org



ZAMI's Mission

ZAMI, Inc. is a not-for-profit collective for lesbians of African descent residing in the Atlanta Metropolitan area.

ZAMI's primary mission is to empower and affirm the lives of lesbians of African descent through scholarships, leadership development, social activities, drum performances, outreach and education.

The organization also provides a forum and affirming space for the voices of lesbian writers of color.

ZAMI sponsors special programming to develop the leadership potential of young lesbians and to honor the life and legacy of Audre Lorde.

Audre Lorde and her Daughter, Beth

ZAMI Board of Directors

Beryl "BJ" Jackson, Chair
Lynn Duhart, Vice Chair
Frances Wood
Charone Padgett
Tonia Poteat
Jill Ford
Miya Binta
Nakia Brown
Lyric Harmon
Edith Biggers
Mary Anne Adams

Newsletter Contributors
Kelley Alexander, Editor
BN Brown
Tracey Foxworth
Debra Renee Jeter
Mary Anne Adams

DrumSista Scheduled to Perform at Southern Womyn 's Festival

ZAMI's performance group, DrumSista will perform at the 6th Annual Southern Womyn's Festival scheduled for April 28th - May 2nd, 2005 .

The six day festival will be held at Enota Mountain Resort nestled in a valley among the highest mountains in Northern Georgia and is located just minutes from Helen, GA.

This resort has several waterfalls. There are streams with swift water for tubing and rafting and a stocked trout pond for fishing. There is a basketball court, shuffle board, three in-ground trampolines, volleyball court as well as a Lodge for indoor workshops. In addition to DrumSista, more than 20 entertainers have been booked for the festival including the J'Ville Kings, Giwayen Mata, and Sister Funk. DrumSista is slated to perform on Saturday, April 30th on the day stage.

DrumSista

DrumSista members: Angela Taylor, Shondra Moorehead, Kelley Alexander, Beryl Jackson, Bert Carey and Cara Page.

Tixs for the festival can be purchased online:

http://www.gaywomyn.org

Did You Know?

ZAMI established its **Audre Lorde Scholarship Fund** in 1995 and awarded its first two scholarships of $1000 each in 1997. The first two recipients were Wendy O'Neal of Spelman College and Akeya Works of Georgia State University.

The Audre Lorde Scholarship Fund is named in honor of **Audre Lorde (1934-1992)**, the acclaimed author and State Poet of New York who published nine volumes of poetry and five works of prose. She identified as a Black lesbian, warrior poet and is internationally regarded as a significant contributor to the struggle for women's liberation and lesbian and gay rights.

(R) on Flat Shoals

75 South

exit 128 →

turn to (L)

Henry Baptist Church

come to Walmart

→ fork w

road - BP

- Go straight past BP to Flat Shoals

Newsletter for Atlanta's Premiere African-American Lesbian Organization

ZAMI OUTLook

Volume 2, Issue 1 WINTER 2005

Calendar of Upcoming Events

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ZAMI, n.

A Carriacou word meaning women who work together as friends and lovers. The name ZAMI also honors the late Audre Lorde.

Inside this issue:

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ZAMI Awarded Record Number of Scholarships in 2004!

ZAMI awarded a record-breaking 21 scholarships at the 9th Annual Audre Lorde Scholarship Program. The recipients were:

Erica Woodland, Graduate School, Social Work—The Sheryl Burke Award

Tajuana Kebo Drew, Undergraduate, Creative Writing/English—The Pat Parker Award funded by Io Cyrus

Preston Shumaker, Graduate, Clinical Psychology—The Ruth Ellis Award funded by Wendy Belkin

Jonathan Ann Jones, Undergraduate, Nursing—The Cherie Caldwell Award

Stephanie Forbes, Undergraduate, Creative Writing—The Sheryl Burke Award

Eldrige Holloway, Graduate, Conflict Management—The Cherie Caldwell Award

Lynnee Bonner, Graduate, Ethnic Studies—The Sheryl Burke Award

Craig Washington, Undergraduate, Social Work—The Bayard Rustin Award funded by Allen Thornell

Shelley Barry, Graduate, Film & Media Arts—The Ruth Ellis Award funded by Wendy Belkin

Xanthia Johnson, Graduate, Community Counseling—The Sherry Turner Award

Lauren McCray, Undergraduate, Psychology—The Edith Biggers-Kathi Martin Award

Shelton Jackson, Undergraduate, Accounting—The Tony Daniels Community Ally Award funded by ADODI Muse

Kazem Abdullah, Graduate, Conducting Performance—The Ronald Moore Humanitarian Award

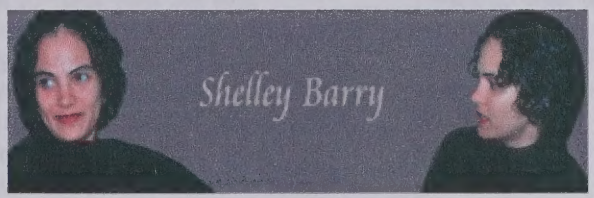
Olayinka Majekodunmi, Undergraduate, Public Health Education—The Margaret Ntombi Howell Power & Presence Memorial Award , funded by Rhesa M. Jenkins & Ama R. Saran

Brandi-el Cook, Undergraduate, Law; Medicine—The Hannah Guishard Award

Continued on Page 3

Spotlight: Scholarship Recipient "Shelley" Barry

Disabled in the Taxi Wars in 1996, Shelley Barry became active in disability politics and coordinated national policy for Disabled People, South Africa, in Parliament for two years. Barry is a member of New Moon Ventures, a women's theater collective and is currently working on a play called, *Spinning Wheels.*



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ZAMI OUTLook

WINTER 2005

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Body: Sheryl strives to live a productive and healthy life. She follows a path of holistic health and maintains a lifestyle of exercise by walking and playing tennis. She is a vegetarian and grows most of her vegetables in her own backyard.

Balance: In striving to maintain balance in her life, Sheryl was led to become a ZAMI scholarship donor five years ago. In fact, Burke's coming out anniversary coincides with her first ZAMI contribution.

"That was the year I said no more hiding who I am. Everything changed for me that year, including my relationships and the way I felt about myself," says Burke.

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Cheryle Spann, Undergraduate, Communication/Public Relations—The Kelly Alexander Award

Ana M. Rodgers, Undergraduate, Computer Information Systems—Antonio Torres Award

Doreen Watson, Graduate, Sociology & Women's Studies—The Adrienne Rich Award

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NEWSLETTER FOR ATLANTA'S PREMIERE AFRICAN-AMERICAN LESBIAN ORGANIZATION

ZAMI, Inc.
P.O. Box 2502
Decatur, Georgia 30031

Phone: 404-370-0920

www.zami.org

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Audre Lorde and her Daughter, Beth

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DrumSista members: Angela Taylor, Shondra Moorehead, Kelley Alexander, Beryl Jackson, Bert Carey and Cara Page.

DrumSista

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Drumsista

Newsletter for Atlanta's Premiere African-American Lesbian Organization

ZAMI OUTLook

Volume 2, Issue 1 WINTER 2005

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- Deadline to register for ZAMI's Sign Language Class
  Jan. 26
- DrumSista at Southern Womyn's Music Festival
  April 28– May 2
- Audre Lorde Scholarship Applications Deadline —
  May 15
- 10th Annual Audre Lorde Scholarship Program—
  Sept. 17th

Visit our website for more info

ZAMI, n.

A Carriacou word meaning women who work together as friends and lovers. The name ZAMI also honors the late Audre Lorde.

Inside this issue:

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ZAMI Awarded Record Number of Scholarships in 2004!

ZAMI awarded a record-breaking 21 scholarships at the 9th Annual Audre Lorde Scholarship Program. The recipients were:

Erica Woodland, Graduate School, Social Work—The Sheryl Burke Award

Tajuana Kebo Drew, Undergraduate, Creative Writing/English—The Pat Parker Award funded by Io Cyrus

Preston Shumaker, Graduate, Clinical Psychology—The Ruth Ellis Award funded by Wendy Belkin

Jonathan Ann Jones, Undergraduate, Nursing—The Cherie Caldwell Award

Stephanie Forbes, Undergraduate, Creative Writing—The Sheryl Burke Award

Eldrige Holloway, Graduate, Conflict Management—The Cherie Caldwell Award

Lynnee Bonner, Graduate, Ethnic Studies—The Sheryl Burke Award

Craig Washington, Undergraduate, Social Work—The Bayard Rustin Award funded by Allen Thornell

Shelley Barry, Graduate, Film & Media Arts—The Ruth Ellis Award funded by Wendy Belkin

Xanthia Johnson, Graduate, Community Counseling—The Sherry Turner Award

Lauren McCray, Undergraduate, Psychology—The Edith Biggers-Kathi Martin Award

Shelton Jackson, Undergraduate, Accounting—The Tony Daniels Community Ally Award funded by ADODI Muse

Kazem Abdullah, Graduate, Conducting Performance—The Ronald Moore Humanitarian Award

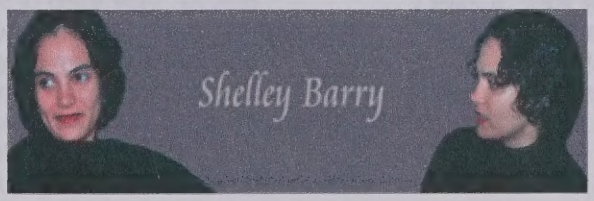
Olayinka Majekodunmi, Undergraduate, Public Health Education—The Margaret Ntombi Howell Power & Presence Memorial Award , funded by Rhesa M. Jenkins & Ama R. Saran

Brandi-el Cook, Undergraduate, Law; Medicine—The Hannah Guishard Award

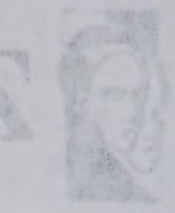
Continued on Page 3

Spotlight: Scholarship Recipient "Shelley" Barry

Disabled in the Taxi Wars in 1996, Shelley Barry became active in disability politics and coordinated national policy for Disabled People, South Africa, in Parliament for two years. Barry is a member of New Moon Ventures, a women's theater collective and is currently working on a play called, *Spinning Wheels.*



Barry is a Graduate student of Film and Media Arts at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She received the Ruth Ellis Award, which is funded by Wendy Belkin.



Adams Resigns As ZAMI's Executive Director

As of December 31, 2004, Mary Anne Adams, long time Executive Director of ZAMI, vacated the position. No replacement will be named.

Adams had been with ZAMI since 1990—first as a member, then as Board Chair and then ultimately took on the responsibilities of Executive Director, in a volunteer capacity, in 1997.

Mary Anne Adams

She was instrumental in building the organization in a number of areas; of the most far-reaching is founding the Audre Lorde Scholarship Fund, which, to date, has given away 70 $1,000.00 scholarships to out Black lesbians and gay men enrolled in colleges across the country. Adams increased the organization's visibility by designing and implementing the ZAMI website; producing a number of events and functions that showcased the talents of many lesbians and gay men locally and nationally; and starting Drum-Sista, a drumming group for lesbians of color.

Adams' commitment to building community and fostering relationships with other organizations led her to involve ZAMI as co-sponsor of a number of important events, including: The Atlanta Premiere of A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde; the Annual Bayard Rustin rally; he first lesbian and gay Black History Celebration at Spelman College; and a weekend retreat on internalized homophobia with funding from the Fund for Southern Communities.

Because of Adams' and ZAMI's demonstrated commitment to the leadership development of young women, the organization has been the recipient of several local and national grants to provide equal access for all lesbians.

Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative Hires ZAMI Member

12 Things About Simone Bell

Is a Detroit native and has lived in Atlanta for 15 years

Has been with her partner, Valarie, for just as long

Is especially grateful to Kelley Alexander, whom she has also known for 15 years, for always believing in her, sometimes even more than she believed in herself

Is currently raising her 3 school-aged nephews: Tyler, Brandon & Joshua

Was the recipient of a ZAMI scholarship for three consecutive years

Enjoys taking adventurous vacations

Previously served on the ZAMI board

Attended Fisk University, then began studying at Agnes Scott College, where she was faced with diversity, which allowed her to see the best and worst of people

Has always worked in health care, but also enjoys writing and working in the queer community

Serves as the Outreach & Volunteer Manager for ALCI

Strongly urges everyone to "Hold on to our right to vote and believe"

Quote of the day: "ZAMI can make you think you can do anything"

Poetry Corner

Poems By Tracey Foxworth

Twin Souls

Others vie for my attention but only you occupy my thoughts by wandering into them like an old friend.

You are the only one I desire to love freely.

I want to color your life with passion, methodically uncover layer by layer, creep inch by inch into your mind, penetrate your heart with uninhibited love, slowly and soothingly make love to your soul and weave it all into a tapestry of tranquility that will cover you daily with sensuality.

I want to walk with you down red-carpeted paths covered with petals of orchids and colored roses to a table by the sea, set for three, Spirit,
you
and me.

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Spotlight: Scholarship Donor Sheryl Burke

A wise person once said that when one is balanced and has a clear understanding of him or her Self, the spirit comes first, the mind follows, and the body belongs. That philosophy describes Sheryl Burke and her giving.

Spirit: Burke believes that a higher power guides her life. She allows life to flow and loves being with family and friends. One of her favorite places to go for quiet time is to the ocean because of the peace and tranquility she finds there.

Mind: As a child, Burke realized she wanted to have a career protecting the state of the world, so she decided to enter the law profession. She is a personal injury attorney (with offices in California and Atlanta) who is passionate about her profession and about her desire to make a difference in the world.

Donor Burke on right

"I work for the under-represented, and as far as I am concerned, it is a ministry. I try to empower my clients with information so that they can make intelligent decisions about their rights," says Burke. She continues, "My goal is to have a positive impact on all of them."

Body: Sheryl strives to live a productive and healthy life. She follows a path of holistic health and maintains a lifestyle of exercise by walking and playing tennis. She is a vegetarian and grows most of her vegetables in her own backyard.

Balance: In striving to maintain balance in her life, Sheryl was led to become a ZAMI scholarship donor five years ago. In fact, Burke's coming out anniversary coincides with her first ZAMI contribution.

"That was the year I said no more hiding who I am. Everything changed for me that year, including my relationships and the way I felt about myself," says Burke.

Scholarships Awarded, continued from page 1

Christel Miller, Undergraduate, Psychology, Visual Arts—The Mabel Hampton Honorary Academic & Human Rights Award - Donor Reps, Wendy & Lee Hampton

Lukwanna Littlejohn, Undergraduate, English—The Keiron Williams Hero Award funded by Kevin Bynes

Michael Robinette, Graduate, Women Studies—The Kecia Cunningham Award

Charles Tyson, Undergraduate, Communications/Public Relations—The Kelley Alexander Award

Ava M. Rodgers, Undergraduate, Computer Information Systems—The Antonio Jones Award

Doreen Watson, Graduate, Sociology & Women's Studies— The Mellonee Rheams & Debra Mlambo Award

Established in 1995, the Fund's goal is to award 10 or more named scholarships of $1000 each annually to "out" lesbians and gay men of African descent who are making significant contributions to their communities. ZAMI wants to support and encourage their continuing education by providing scholarships to those women and men enrolled in accredited technical, undergraduate and graduate programs. Since 1997, the Fund has awarded over 70 scholarships to lesbians and gay men.

The Stars Are *Out* (Too)

2005 This is a 7 year. Seven searches for peace and understanding. The year 2005 will indeed be a heart-filled search for an elusive peace throughout the world, as it may be hard to find. A year of big events, on the personal level as well as in the larger world. This is a tumultuous year of changes. Libra is graced by lucky Jupiter, highlighting partnerships and marriage: a sacred issue this year. The larger American society may not be ready to accept revolutionary ideas about marriage and partnership yet. This is the year of slow dawning toward accepting the ultimate reality of gay marriage. It's just a matter of time. Fall casts Jupiter in sexy, dark, secretive Scorpio. Look out!!! Huge secrets revealed, shocking stuff. By that time Saturn will be in Leo, squaring Jupiter. Leo is proud and loves the limelight. Leo also loves children and creativity. Notice the extreme focus on celebrity. Those in the limelight may want to escape from the glare. Late 2005 should find the world needing to work harder to protect the weakest among us, the promise of the future, our children. And not just with catchy slogans, but in truth.

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Mary Jane Adams

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Tracy Bowers
Debra Anne Lane
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Drumsista members, Angela Taylor, Shandra Moreland, Kelley Alexander, Deryl Jackson, Deb Curry and Cara Pugh.

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Drumsista

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ZAMI

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 2 *ATLANTA'S PREMIERE AFRICAN- AMERICAN LESBIAN ORGANIZATION*
NOV,1996

MARY ANNE'S MUSINGS

It is mid October as I write this column – two and a half months away from the New Year. The leaves are starting to change into a cornucopia of vivid oranges, golds and burnt reds.

The National Weather Center is forecasting temperatures to dip into the mid 30's and low 40's and it's finally starting to feel like fall in Atlanta!

Days like these bring on moments of reflection and I wonder what 1997 will bring for this community and most specifically for ZAMI as a group of Black lesbians working together as friends and lovers. 1996 was a very good year for our organization as we achieved many of our goals.

Several of you commented throughout last year that we needed a larger space and an earlier meeting time. We have made those adjustments by moving to 828 West Peachtree Street and changing the meeting time from 6:30-8:30 pm., to 4-6pm.

The new meeting space is much larger and equipped with couches, recliners and padded chairs. There is a television for video watching and a soda machine. Please come and check it out.

Additionally, we are changing the format of our meetings to have discussions and special programs on the second Sunday and to gather for potlucks and/or community activities on the fourth Sunday.

On October 27, we will have our first potluck at the new meeting space from 4-7pm. Please bring your favorite dish, board game, deck of cards and a friend! There is a microwave oven in the room if you need to heat a dish. ZAMI will supply sodas and paper products.

On November 10, ZAMI will meet with Lesbians of Color over 50. We will view the film, "Ruby and Tiny" which chronicles the lives of a Black lesbian couple who have been living and working together as musicians since the 1930's.There will be discussion immediately following the film...

Please see details under ZAMI meeting!

DEAR GRANDMA

Dear Grandma and Mom:

I hope this letter finds you both in the best of health. Lately, in the early hours when the kids are asleep and all is quiet within my world, I often reflect on days gone by, chances given and moments lost.

I remember a child's feeling of helplessness, a man's anger and a woman's lack of courage, a battered ego and wounded pride. But just as suddenly, I remember breakfast in the park, Sunday morning church service and family gatherings.

More importantly, I remember how you both have given me a profound sense of pride in being the best, at whatever I chose to be.

And this is when I begin to cry because I hope that what I am about to share does not cause you to change.

I realize that at age 41, I am quite small in the scheme of things, and

Inside This Issue

1	MARY ANNE'S MUSINGS..... LETTER TO GRANDMA
2	DYKES AGAINST DRAMA
3	SISTAH PROFILE....ANTONIA'S CORNER...HAPPY BIRTHDAY
4	ANTONIA'S CORNER CONT.
5	FOREPLAY
6.	ASK THE DOC.....ATLANTA LESBIAN CANCER INITIATIVE
7.	CULTURAL HAPPENINGS.....MEETINGS.....ANNOUNCEMENTS

LTR CONT;

that I may have been hasty in decisions that I have made and paths I have chosen to take.

Over the years, I have given so much and throughout the process, I became lost. I guess I could say that I have decided to find myself but that would be untrue. Because now, I realize that I have always been here – you have just refused to see who I really am.

See me now, PLEASE!

Not as Deborah – a wife for 19 1/2 years, a mother, a daughter and a granddaughter. Instead, see me as Deborah – the intelligent individual you helped to create. See me as Deborah the "lesbian".

Grandma, I can see you shaking your head and saying sadly, **"lesbian, Arthur Lee did she say lesbian? Lord, Lord, Lord."** Mom I know you are probably saying, **"the first to go to college, the first to get divorced and now the first lesbian. She's really lost it now and she is going to be destroyed with the rest of this wicked world!"**

Grandma, Mom, I know you are saying these things, but I still love you. And it is because I love you, that I share this with you now.

Don't be sad for me, after years of frustration and pain,years of sensing **"something wasn't right"** I finally have an understanding. And it is with much fear and uncertainty that I share the reasons with you.

Yes, I am a lesbian and this is the most important and best discovery about myself that I could have made. I am a lesbian, and that is good.

So in closing, please know that I am not seeking your permission, nor your approval or even your understanding. What I ask is your willingness to try to see me as I am.

I miss you and want us to be a family again.

Love, Deborah

Deborah McCree is a registered practicing Nurse Midwife; and is currently working on a novel.

DYKES AGAINST DRAMA: A MONTHLY ADVICE COLUMN

Dear Ms.Vulva,
Am a recent transplant to the South and have found both the culture, food and women most enjoyable.

For a couple of months I have been courting a very smart, attractive and wonderful southern sister but am confused. Here's the problem – we drink, dance and dine almost all the time but I'm the one dishing out the dollars!

Now I know I used the term **"courting"** to describe our actual **"dating"** but being a northerner, I just threw it in to be cute...could it be that I really AM supposed to literally be paying for the favor of her company?

Please advise, 'cause my nose is open but I can't smell a thing...

Dear "Nose ...Open,"
I smell a couple of things...Obviously, you are courting/dating a smart yet selfish sister. Her behavior isn't about North or South it's all about HER!

Get a grip! If the woman's all that wonderful then you need to do some talking – and not over a meal that you've paid for. Take some time and find out what her expectations are, is she employed (?), does she barter – then you decide whether or not you can <u>afford</u> (literally) to continue seeing her

Dear Ms.Vulva,
I have been dating a woman for about a year and almost every aspect of our relationship is fine – except for the sex. She considers herself a **"top"** and doesn't let me make love to her.

I am almost ashamed to admit that things have gone on like this for so long but it has begun to bother me. I have asked her if there is something wrong with how/when/where I touch her but she say's it's not me at all but she prefers giving me pleasure and receives pleasure from the giving.

Help! It feels good but I'm lonely at the bottom...

Dear "Lonely...Bottom":
Your lover's insistence on <u>only</u> pleasing you and not expecting or desiring your touch is a symptom of the ever so frightening **"the last dyke"** syndrome. Many **'tops'** <u>think</u> they have a greater amount of power/control in a relationship because they control the pleasure...

It's a power-trip and a lonely one at that... Because if the truth be told - and you know I 'm gonna tell you the truth - **'bottoms'** REALLY have the power! Not only do we get what we need but we also get it without asking...(and if you gotta ask so what? That's about all you have to do ...if you get my drift)

Now I know you think this sounds selfish and all that but hey – think about it ...if you're with a woman who doesn't want to share her body – what else isn't she sharing? (Only you know the answer to that, honey)

Ms. Vulva cont;

Think about the fundamental healthiness of this relationship – but in the meantime you need to be on the look out for a real lover- not a stereotype.

Ms.Vulva's Gem: Remember – where there's a dyke there's always a drama.
When Ms. Vulva is not minding other dykes' business, she can be found searching for some drama of her own.

Need a solution to a drama? Write to Ms. Vulva c/o ZAMI at PO Box 2502, Decatur, GA 30031

SISTAH PROFILE

Meet ZAMI member TANISHA!

She hails from Spartanburg, South Carolina and moved here in August, 1995 to be closer to her girlfriend who lived in Athens. They subsequently split and Tanisha is currently single.

"At the age of 26, I'm ready to meet my life partner, build a future together and have children." Tanisha expressed frustration with the dating scene here, and the difficulty in meeting women outside of the bars.

Meanwhile, she works in sales at a local bank while attending night school at Mercer University for a teacher's certificate in English. "Although, I have a degree in English with a concentration in Journalism ,it's always been my dream to teach English at the high school level."

Tanisha will be finished with her requirements in June and is undecided about staying in Atlanta. "I'm an only child and I miss my mom. We have always been very close and she affirms me in my life choices."

Tanisha came out to her mother in a pretty unique way. "I went home to visit and she commented on my shoes. 'I told her that my girlfriend had bought them.'

She said you mean your friend and I said no, I mean my girlfriend and she said so you're like that and I said yeah, I'm like that. She laughed and that was that. "

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ZAMI MEMBERS:

Hannah- Oct 1
Iris- Oct 9
Pamela- Oct 19
Robin- Nov 4

HOROSCOPE

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22)
Happy birthday, October Scorpios! People may respond favorably to your courage and enterprise this month, but impulsiveness may override your reason. Even if you are the responsible type, you won't be careful now. You could have some problems with your reputation, and your attitude may arouse rivalries and criticism.

You are better able to put others at ease this month. You're attracted to artistic, unique people, and would be fairly comfortable working with groups, clubs, other organizations. You can gain social success and popularity through your friends, but don't let socializing take too much of your time.

Courtesy of American Astrology Magazine.

ANTONIA'S CORNER

HARD- The Wounded Healer

I. Hard/ my calling card

I am hip-hop.
I hold it down for my block,
while holding up the subway walls
of the orange line on my way down
South to made some greenery.
See, no one ever saw me
on my working to middle-class
block.
And they saw even less of me
as my family moved from
one more middle-class neighborhood
to the next.
But now I appear in pastel colors,
with a lock on hip-hop
and a stare practiced on empty
subway chairs.
And this is for all my people.

II. Soft and smooth, I ain't with it/ Hardcore...

You know me.
I'm all up in Macy's looking for a
deal on a pair of flare leg pants.
Or , I'm at the boutique
picking up a hand woven purse
from Guatemala,
'cause I gotta have something
lovingly made
by colored folks in someone's
America.
Hey, I've got culture, style and
consciousness.
And I've got a secret smile that
spreads like Sunday morning butter.
I've got a walk that keeps the fellas
looking.
And I've got AIDS.
This AIDS thing be trying to kick
my ass.
And I kick it right back.
Don't get me wrong,
I haven't always been able to see
my way through the bars
of what most people had said was a
death sentence.

HARD cont;

Sometimes I felt like giving in.
But I'm not going to offer my life
on some white man made,
god-jealous,
quick fix to the undesirables trip.
And I'm certainly not going to die
behind my rejection by
my black people,
hiding behind my black church,
using it to hide
our self-hatred.
Nor will I choose from the other
delectable blackman poisons:
crack, guns and alcohol,
a necrophilic's shopping list
for conspicuous consumption.
No, this black queen is going to get
his life!
I call on the strength of that orisha
who so loved her men-loving
brothers that she became their
protector.
She knows me, too.

III. Posing like you're hard, when really you're quite vaginal

Look,
I don't even know if I have the
energy to talk to you.
What you really need to do is read.
But since you seem to be listening,
let me tell you how it went down.
I'm from the French Quarter,
born and raised a Southerner, thank
you. Grew up a movement baby
and haven't stopped moving since.
How can I stop moving
when there's still so much work to
be done?
I can tell you this much,
if I stop to sit down
I might not ever get back up.
So like Mama Roxie and Ti Bev
before me,
I keep walking this path
partially out of fear of the effect
gravity may have on my body
if I stopped its forward motion.
Don't get around to the Quarter
much anymore,
not since I had to kill all those
people.
Had to kill half of the movement
folks
and a whole tribe of friends.
I even had to kill my pa,
which was the hardest.
Oh, I don't mean I killed them
physically; that may have been
easier. Besides, I believe in non-
violent solutions.
No, I had to deaden them in my
soul. Had to burn them off
like a doctor does the sixth finger
on a newborn's hand. Except, I had
to apply the flame myself. I lit the
first match with feminism. Don't
you know,
when I started talking that women's
liberation stuff, eyes that were
formerly crackling with interest
cooled out.
Then, mouths would form to tell
me: ***The struggle has got to be prioritized and black people's first fight in America is against racism.***
Uh huh.
Tell that to the next woman who is
beaten by a man
while he calls her a
"broke, ugly, black bitch."
And she'll tell you that her particular
combination
wasn't winning any lotteries.
But what really brought me to sear
my extra digit off
was when I got deep,
I mean
up-to-the-tip-nose-deep,
into the pussy.
Lord yeah, that useless finger came
right off then.
Like any major operation
performed without an anesthetic,
it was an almost maddeningly
painful process.
Bur once my love for women
came out of the theoretical
and into the sheets and streets,
looked like the movement had no
more use for me anyhow.
So before my hand could
come
to steal my blackness,
saying it no longer belonged to me,
I burned my traitorous finger all the
way to the nub.
Now I have
brand new
black/feminist /dyke/hands,
which I continue to give to the
struggle.

IV. I dreamt that I was hard.

It was more like a wakeful
nightmare.
You are supposed to be given relief
from what torments you in dreams
by waking.
But both states, sleep and
wakefulness,
leave me without rest.
And I fear death would be no
different, that the horror will follow
me into the hereafter.
That fear and sheer habit
keep me waking up every morning.
I am a survivor.
I survived the holocaust
that never makes it into historical
books, because it is always current.
I revisited the middle passage
when I was forced from
the promised land of my girlhood,
to an alien and brutal adult shore.
Wars don't make provisions for
childhood, so I never felt young.
The war was fought, as many wars
are,
for ignoble reasons.
The war was fought because a
terrified and angry people,
women,
had sworn allegiance to men
who were equally as terrified and
angry.
Only the men were given more
permission to express their venom.
My body and soul were the
battleground for their rages

HARD cont;
against youth, femaleness, and blackness.
As usual, there were the atrocities of war, the unspeakable acts.
But as I said, I am a survivor.
I survived for the very reason I was persecuted, because of my spirit.
Those people who wanted to level me, they wanted to know the limits of human endurance.
They needed to prove that a child, black and female at that,
could not be stronger than they themselves felt.
So they tried every manner of torture they could think of,
in an effort to test their hypothesis.
And when I would not betray my intrinsic worth
by politely dying,
they were pushed to an even greater vigilance. My survival has not been without its costs, however.
I had to give up feeling for other people
to the exact measure
that I had to give up feeling for myself in order to survive.
I left my tears behind when
I escaped from that alien place.
And so the nightmare perpetuates itself.

V. Fuck being hard, Posdnous is complicated.

You see me, right.
Oversized jeans and boots, hands in my pocket,
and ready for whatever.
You've seen my people too;
the cutey, the fire brand and the hard rock.
There are a whole bunch more like them.
Well me, my thing is that I'm into women.
But the only women I can abide are as mean as fuck.
Gotta make me hurt hard for it to feel right.
It's getting complicated, though.
I'm trying to stop chasing after emotional wreckage
like some crazed accident claims lawyer.
I was trying to toughen up
through a steady diet of pain.
I know, you thought I was tough.
Well, I am.
But, I'm soft too.
Lots of time all I really want is to be held
and trust that the woman who is holding me
means me no harm.
Talk about tough,
it's hard to find the ability to be so expressive when the City seems to ask you
to have your game face on all the time. People act as if everybody is running a hustle,
from the preacher to the pusher.
It's like in order to stay here,
we had to lose faith in each other.
The openness ends up being
the look that no well dressed face wants to be caught wearing.
There's an entire body that comes with hardness, too.
And while I inherited a stroll from my dad, I've also got breasts, hips and a vulva.
This trinity forms a gap
right down the center of my tough girl armor.
No matter where else I'm hard,
those will always be my soft spots.
But I'm starting to enjoy the softness. When I finally started crying again, I was relieved to be able to feel.
After years of staring down pain with a straight face,
my face had begun to freeze that way.
I took my tears as a sign of thawing.
Next up has been the reclamation of my trinity for my own pleasure.
I liberated 'em from the strip club cages of other people's minds.
Now I watch,
as the hard and soft try to form a balanced whole.
And the weary wounded healers try to find ways to administer alms,
without returning to the circumstances
that first gave them power.
And it don't stop.
But since you know hip-hop,
you already know that.

Antonia Randolph is a May, 1996 graduate of Spelman College. She is currently working as a Development Intern in Fund Raising at the Southern Center for Human Rights.

Her poem Hard-The Wounded Healer was recently on exhibit at King Plow Arts Center as a collaborative piece with Wendi O'Neal portraying images of rap music and hip-hop culture.

Antonia will be performing on Wednesday, Nov 13 at Dekalb College's Central Campus in the H Bldg. at the Black light Cafe. This will be an evening of prose and poetry with an urban hip- hop flavor.

FOREPLAY

A novella by Deardria Nesbitt
Self- Published pp69
Excerpts can be purchased at Charis Bookstore.

This story opens with a brief but steamy interlude between Ronne and Seville ... Ronne is a rich and powerful record executive and Seville is the insatiable and sexy woman married to Ronne's uncle. Their desire for each other is eclipsed only by their desire for CheyAnta-the novella's central character. CheyAnta's is a newly rich yet influential record label owner.
She is a power hitter who knows how to play the game and win amongst-traditionally all-white, mostly all-male but seldom straight-music industry executives.
Chey Anta's struggle to maintain her independence and identify are the main themes of this tale.

Reviewed by Michelle Smith

ASK THE DOC is a new monthly column devoted to answering basic medical questions. It is not meant to take the place of a doctor's visit.

Dear DOC:

Th e woman that I love is HIV positive. I am HIV negative, and I insist on having unprotected sex to show her that I'm not afraid of her and to prove my love. When I make love, I want to feel her body--a dental dam or saran wrap just isn't natural or erotic. Besides, lesbians can't get AIDS from each other--right?

Signed,

Unprotected and Feeling Good!

Dear **Unprotected:**

Engaging in unsafe sex is not the true test of love for an HIV+ partner. How can you fully love another woman when you don't love yourself enough to protect yourself?

It is a commonly held MYTH that women who have sex with women can not get AIDS. Yet, cases have been reported in the medical literature since 1984 describing transmission of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, between women.

LESBIANS GET AIDS.

It is not clear how many women have been infected by their female partners because the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has not kept statistics specifically on woman to woman transmission. Lesbians are placed in "No Identified Risk" category or in categories describing other risk behaviors. (E.g., a lesbian IV drug user would be in the category of IV drug user.)

Since we are invisible in the AIDS epidemic, many lesbians believe that we are not at risk for HIV/AIDS and engage in risky behaviors, but it is precisely our behavior that is more important than the group to which we belong.

What we DO is more important than who we are. LOW RISK DOES NOT EQUAL NO RISK.

Here are the FACTS:

HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, is transmitted when blood, vaginal fluids, breast milk or semen from an HIV infected person enters your blood stream. Whether behavior is safe or unsafe depends on the chances of your partner's bodily fluids coming into contact with your blood.

– Unprotected oral sex is risky especially if your partner is on her period or if she has a vaginal infection. If a woman is HIV positive, menstrual blood and vaginal secretions contain HIV.

To make sex safer, cover your partner's genital area (vulva) with a dental dam, plastic wrap (Handi-wrap, Saran wrap), or cut open a condom.

–Sores or cuts on fingers, mouth or vagina of either partner increases the risk of transmission during vaginal play (finger fucking), or (fisting).

–Sex toys are safer when used by you alone but if you share--put a condom on that vibrator, dildo, etc.

–Wet kissing can be risky if one or both of you have a sore or cut in your mouth or bleeding gums. Wait an hour after brushing or flossing your teeth before kissing.

As lesbians we can also take care of ourselves by talking to our partners before having sex--in the medical world we call it "taking a sexual history."

Ask her if she has engaged in any risky behavior--drug use, especially

IV drug use, sharing needles, etc. Has she had sex with a "high risk partner" (HIV+ woman or man, IV drug user)? **(Yes some lesbians have sex with men and shoot drugs)**
Remember it's what we do that's important not who we are).

Has she been tested for HIV? and get tested yourself. Get at least two HIV tests 3-6 months apart with no unsafe sex or otherwise risky behavior in between.

REFERENCES:

Poteat, Tonia. AIDS and Black Lesbians: Barriers to Safer Behavior, 1993.

L.A. Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center Home Page (www.safersex. org/women/lesbianss.html)

Dr. Edith Biggers specializes in treating patients who are HIV+ and have AIDS and yes she does have patients who are lesbians.

Please send basic medical questions to **ASK THE DOC** c/o ZAMI at PO Box 2502 Decatur, GA 30031

ATLANTA LESBIAN CANCER INITIATIVE

Support group for lesbians with cancer and their partner...

Scholars estimate that there may be a higher incidence of cancer among lesbians. As lesbians we have become concerned about the number of lesbian friends who have been diagnosed with cancer. When these friends were offered assistance through support groups, the groups were predominantly white heterosexual individuals. Our friends

Cancer Initiative cont;

talked with us about their need to talk about their lives as lesbians living with cancer, yet felt unsafe revealing themselves as lesbians in a predominantly white heterosexual support group. As a result, we have organized a community group, the Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative and our goal is to provide a safe environment for lesbians with cancer and their partners.

WHERE AND WHEN WE MEET

In keeping with providing a safe environment, we are offering the group at no charge in an office at Charis Books and More, a local feminist book store. Charis serves as a meeting place for many programs and organizations in the lesbian community. The support group began meeting in early October and is co-facilitated by an African-American lesbian who is a licensed counselor and a white lesbian who is a professor of nursing with a background in counseling.

REFERRALS TO THE GROUP

Lesbians with cancer may refer themselves or may be referred to the group by calling the Initiative at **404-651-2866.** A group facilitator will return the call and conduct a brief telephone interview in order to describe the group and obtain information about the potential participant. She will be given the time, place and directions to the group, should she choose to participate.

Participants may invite their partners to attend the group if they desire.

DONATIONS

Please make Tax exempt donation to the Fund for Southern Communities, 547 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE, Suite 100, Atlanta, GA 30308 Please specify the Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative as the recipient.

CULTURALHAPPENINGS

ART

AGNES SCOTT COLLEGE PRESENTS 3 WOMEN: ARTISTS/ EDUCATORS: DIANE EDISON, APRIL KATZ AND VIRGINIA SCOTCHIE Sunday, Nov 3 through Sunday, December 8, 1996,Opening Reception, Nov 3, 2- 4:30pm. Call 404-638-6368

African-American Improvisational Quilt Exhibition **High Museum** thru 2/1/1997 For more infor call 404-738-HIGH

"LOVE LABOR LOST"explores love and its ties to gender, class and race. **City Gallery@ Chastain** call 404-257-1804

THEATRE

ZAMI is organizing a group to see JOMANDI'S Production of **"for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf"** on Sunday, Nov 3 @ 3pm. The cost is $15 but we have ads for $2 off full price.
If interested, call Mary Anne by Nov 1.

FILM

THE11th **LATIN AMERICAN** FILM FESTIVAL – High Museum of Art
SECRETS & LIES- Garden Hills
BIG NIGHT- Tara 4
GET ON THE BUS- Midtown 8
BOUND- Phipps Plaza

SOUNDS

VARIETY PLAYHOUSE:
Tuck&Patti- Nov 6
Saffire:The Uppity Blues Women-Nov 16
THE OMNI:
Melissa Etheridge- Nov 13

SPORTS

Women's Professional BASKETBALL-**The Atlanta Glory** home opener is 4 p.m. Sat., October 26 at the Georgia State Arena. Tickets on Sale for only $10 call 404-249-6400

MINDANDBODY

Afrocentric Self-Enpowerment Support Group, workshops and retreats for Black women who seek personal, financial and spiritual liberation. Call 770-493-1127

READINGS

November Programs of note at **CHARIS BOOKS** 404-524-0304

Thursday, Nov 7: 5-7pm- **THE SPIRITUAL TAROT**

Thursday, Nov 14: 7:30pm- **A NIGHT OF LESBIAN READINGS WITH ELENA SHERMAN**

Friday, Nov 15: 7:00pm-10:00pm- **AN INFORMAL EVENING WITH bell hooks**

Thursday, Nov 21: 7:30pm- **MEMORY MAMBO: READINGS, LATINA STYLE**

Friday, Nov 22: 8:00pm- **SEX SERIES: SEX TOYS. WOMEN ONLY EVENT!**

ZAMI

STEERING COMMITTEE

MARY ANNE ADAMS
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Member at Large

NEWSLETTER COLLECTIVE:

MARY ANNE ADAMS

MILLICENT GOODWIN

MICHELLE SMITH

Questions? Comments, Suggestions...

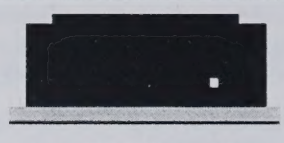
Call ZAMI at 404 370-1392

or write

PO BOX 2502

DECATUR, GA 30031

OPEN HOUSE



Please join **ZAMI** members **Maria and Lisa** at an open house at their store, **MORE THAN A NOTION, Inc., on Sunday, October 27, 1996** from 12 noon until 5pm. Eracism tanks and shorts will be **1/2 price.** They are located inside **"OBVIOUS CHOICES"** at 122 Avondale Road, Avondale Estates.

Please call **404-294-0740**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Friday, November 8 from 7-10 pm., The Charis Circle sponsors **COOKING WITH HONEY @** Central Congregational Church on Clairmont Road. The Charis Circle will celebrate **Charis 22nd birthday** and the publication of **Cooking with Honey: What Literary Lesbians Eat** with an evening of good food and fine writing.

There is a $10 donation for the event and proceeds go to the Charis Circle, the non-profit organization responsible for Charis Thursday evenings and other programming. **Call 404-524-0304** for more infor.

Saturday and Sunday, November 9 and 10—all day!!!

CHARIS 22ND BIRTHDAY PARTY AND SALE!

Come out and enjoy; there will be food, drink and 10% off everything in the store.

ZAMI MEETINGS....

Don't forget the potluck on **Sunday, Oct 27** from 4-7 pm. Please bring a dish- **cook it , buy it, grow it- we don't care!**

The 2nd Sunday meeting on **Nov 10** will be at **Edith and Mary Anne's** home due to a scheduling conflict at our meeting space. The film will start promptly at **4:10 pm.** Their address is 783 N. Parkwood Road, Decatur 404-370-1392 or 404-378-5865

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

ZAMI, Inc.

FOR AND ABOUT LESBIANS OF AFRICAN DESCENT LIFTING UP, HOLDING UP EACH OTHER AND OUR COMMUNITY

Name _____

Address _____

Phone_____Pager_____

Date of Birth _____

Occupation _____

How did you find out about ZAMI?

_____

Skills and Talents I would like to contribute to ZAMI :

_____

I have enclosed a check for $ 35/year or an installment amount for _____

May we call you for volunteer work ?
Yes ___ no _____